

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515
March 25, 2016

265 Received & Inspected
APR 04 2016
FCC Mail Room

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: *In the Matter of Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization*, WC Docket 11-42, *Telecommunications Carriers Eligible for Universal Service Support*, WC Docket 09-197.

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

We the undersigned are writing concerning the orders posted for the open meeting of the FCC on March 31, 2016 regarding the Lifeline program. This order will give Lifeline carriers the option of going either to the state or to the FCC for an eligibility designation. We are concerned that the orders ignore the process set out in 47 U.S.C. Sec. 214(e), which mandates that the States conduct such designations.

State regulatory commissions are currently charged with ferreting out waste, fraud, and abuse in the Lifeline program. As an example, the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, not the FCC, first identified fraudulent funding requests from Icon Telecom. Due to the Oklahoma Corporation Commission's oversight, Icon relinquished its ability to obtain federal Lifeline support.

States, including our state of Oklahoma, have strong checks and balances in place to ensure nefarious wireline and wireless providers do not have access to Lifeline support. The proposed FCC orders would undo this system of checks and balances, and would limit state's rights as laid out in current law.

We strongly urge the FCC to reject these proposals, and ensure that we stand up for state's rights. Ninety public utility commissioners have urged the FCC to reject these proposals. We agree that removing the state role would only result in additional fraud and abuse.

We appreciate your consideration of our request to reject these proposals, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Steve Russell
Member of Congress



Tom Cole
Member of Congress



Frank Lucas
Member of Congress



Markwayne Mullin
Member of Congress



Jim Bridenstine
Member of Congress



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

June 22, 2016

The Honorable Jim Bridenstine
U.S. House of Representatives
216 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bridenstine:

Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding the Commission's recent decision to create a streamlined federal Lifeline Broadband Provider (LBP) designation process. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

Broadband has evolved to become a necessity. Broadband is necessary to connect individuals to employment opportunities, to complete an education, and to access important services online. At a time when our economy and lives are increasingly moving online, Lifeline must do the same. That is why transforming Lifeline for the 21st century is key to the future of this vital program.

The Lifeline Modernization Order we recently adopted takes the next major step in fostering the Commission's commitment to universal service. The Order modernizes the program to support broadband and refocuses it to meet the 21st century's communications challenges. By dramatically improving Lifeline's management and design, and putting the program on sound fiscal footing moving forward, we will help low-income Americans all across our nation connect to the Internet and the opportunities of the broadband revolution. At the same time, the Order puts in place a number of key programmatic reforms designed to protect the integrity of the Lifeline program and build on the Commission's recent efforts to root out waste, fraud, and abuse in the program.

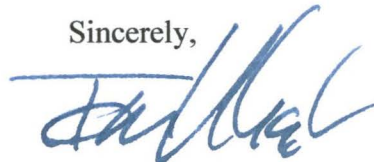
One of the key components of this modernization was an increased emphasis on competition within the Lifeline marketplace. To increase participation by broadband providers and thereby increase availability and consumer choice for this interstate service, the Order enables streamlined, nationwide entry to the Lifeline program for broadband providers.

At the same time, the Order notes that states will continue to play an important role in the Lifeline program. States maintain their authority to designate Lifeline voice and high-cost ETCs within the state. The Order also specifically notes that it does not preclude state commissions from policing the providers operating in their states, including Lifeline providers, to the extent state law has granted them such authority. This partnership between the FCC and states will ensure that Lifeline subscribers receive a choice of services that meet their modern needs while allowing the states and the FCC to work together to protect the integrity of the program.

Page 2—The Honorable Jim Bridenstine

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
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June 22, 2016

The Honorable Tom Cole
U.S. House of Representatives
2467 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

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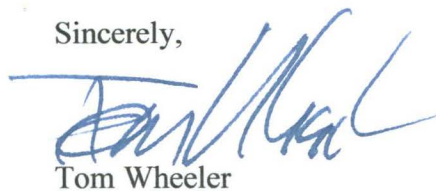
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Tom Wheeler



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WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
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June 22, 2016

The Honorable Frank D. Lucas
U.S. House of Representatives
2405 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Lucas:

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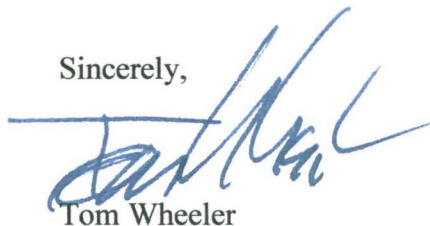
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

June 22, 2016

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
U.S. House of Representatives
1113 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Mullin:

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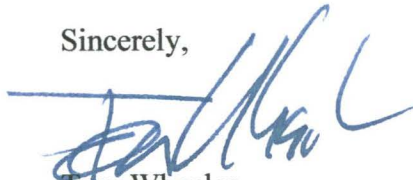
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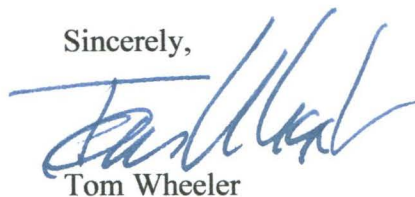
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